

OREGON'S AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

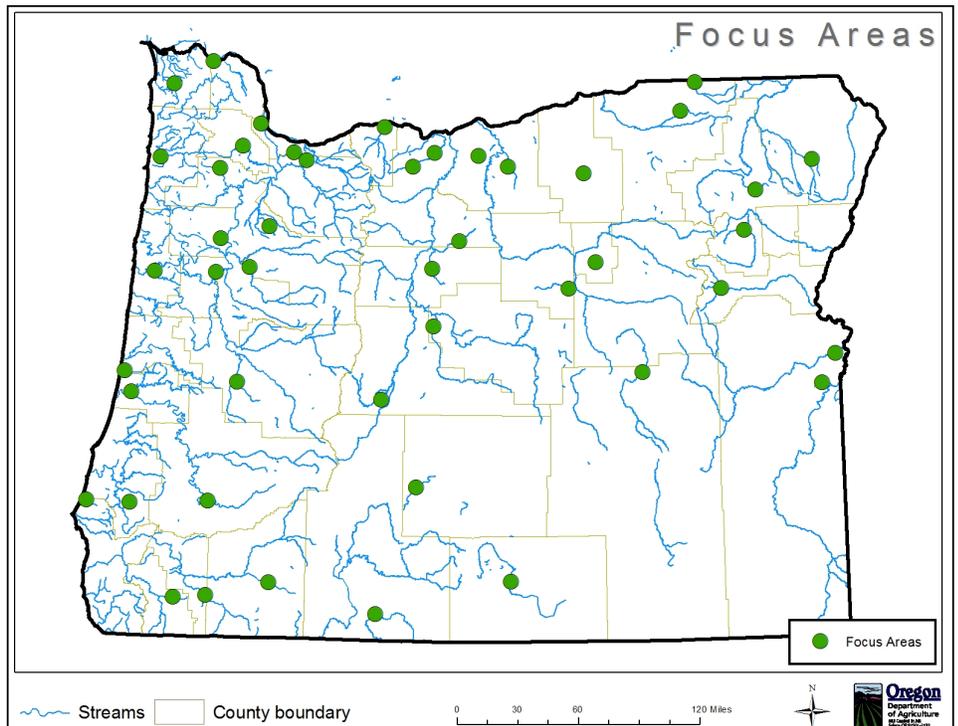
Focus Areas

CONCENTRATING RESOURCES, MEASURING PROGRESS

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program rely on our state's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and other partners to work with interested landowners in implementing agricultural water quality improvement projects.

To tell the story of agriculture and water quality, it is important for SWCDs and ODA to document the many accomplishments that agriculture has made toward meeting Oregon's water quality goals. We can evaluate our work's effectiveness by tracking progress.

One way to evaluate and document the effectiveness of agriculture's water quality improvements is to concentrate restoration and tracking efforts in a "Focus Area." A Focus Area is a relatively small watershed within an Agricultural Water Quality Management Area. The Focus Area concept evolved from conversations between ODA, SWCDs, Local Advisory Committees (LACs), and other stakeholders seeking more ways to document effectiveness of the Agricultural Water Quality Management Program and Area Plans. In the 2013-2015 Biennium, all SWCDs in Oregon are working in Focus Areas.



HOW CAN I FIND MY LOCAL SWCD?

Go to oacd.org/conservation-districts/directory

Call ODA's Ag Water Quality Program at (503) 986-4700

Focus Area Process



Each SWCD selected its Focus Area based on the watershed's need for continued agricultural water quality improvements. In most Focus Areas, SWCDs are working with landowners to improve streamside vegetation, which helps water quality by providing shade, streambank stability, and filtration of potential pollutants. Several Focus Areas are working with landowners to address other concerns, including livestock and sediment.

In the Focus Area, the local SWCD assesses current conditions, works with landowners to improve conditions if necessary, and then re-assesses conditions to measure progress. The SWCD will offer technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who may need help in protecting or improving conditions related to water quality.

ODA, SWCDs, and partners believe that strategic and focused outreach and assistance will lead to improved water quality and make better use of limited resources.

FOCUS AREA ADVANTAGES

- * Measuring progress is easier and more accurate in smaller watersheds.
- * Partners can coordinate financial resources and water quality improvement efforts.
- * Addressing water quality concerns from agricultural activities in a focused area can improve water quality watershed-wide.
- * Providing outreach and technical assistance in a small geographic area increases the chances of success as neighbors help neighbors.
- * Work in one Focus Area today, followed by another tomorrow, eventually will lead to improved water quality regionwide.



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